

Washington, D.C. -- Congresswoman Linda Sánchez, in today's House Judiciary Committee, voted in support of a resolution and report which would urge the House of Representatives to cite former White House Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove for contempt of Congress for his refusal to honor a Congressional subpoena requesting his testimony.

Congresswoman Sánchez' prepared remarks are below.

"I urge support of the resolution and report recommending to the House of Representatives that Karl Rove, former White House Deputy Chief of Staff, be cited for contempt of Congress and that the House pursue enforcing the subpoena through other legal remedies as appropriate.

"This is a simple and straightforward issue: Karl Rove is under subpoena to appear before the House Judiciary Committee. Instead of abiding by that subpoena, he snubbed this Committee, the Congress, and the American people. We have a duty to protect this Committee's institutional prerogatives to conduct meaningful oversight and gather facts for lawmaking in the future. If we refuse to act on Mr. Rove's brazen snub, then we are responsible for the results: Congress will no longer be a co-equal branch of government and our system of checks and balances will be irreparably eroded.

"I am extremely disappointed that Mr. Rove, a private citizen, based his failure to comply with the subpoena on the White House's sweeping claim of immunity. In a letter to Mr. Rove's attorney, White House Counsel Fred Fielding indicated that Mr. Rove is constitutionally immune from compelled congressional testimony about matters that arose during his tenure as a presidential aide and relate to his official duties. However, not a single court decision supports the contention that a former White House aide can refuse to show up to a congressional hearing.

"The Commercial and Administrative Law Subcommittee carefully considered the claims of absolute immunity in a meeting earlier this month. In a detailed ruling, I found that these claims were not properly asserted and not legally valid. The ruling was upheld by Subcommittee members in a 7-1 recorded vote.

"We should not be distracted by the specious arguments and excuses proffered by the Minority in defense of Mr. Rove.

"The Minority has argued that Mr. Rove was out of town — essentially arguing that his absence should be excused much like when a doctor provides a "sick" note for a student who misses a day of school.

"However, neither Mr. Rove nor his counsel informed the Majority that he would be out of the country during the scheduled hearing. Had Mr. Rove truly intended to comply with the subpoena, he should have responded to it by asking to schedule a mutually agreeable date. Instead of complying with a subpoena as every other American would do, Mr. Rove left the country.

"The Minority has argued that Mr. Rove agreed to answer questions from the Committee in

writing and did in fact provide answers to questions about the Siegelman matter posed by Ranking Member Smith.

“However, these written answers are not an adequate substitute for live testimony. The answers were not made under oath, were not signed by Mr. Rove, and failed to address the U.S. Attorney firings or the broader issue of politicization. Why is Mr. Rove willing to talk about these matters in scripted settings that he controls but will not submit to public questioning by all the Members of this Committee?

“The Minority has argued that this Committee’s investigation into the politicization of the Justice Department has been a fishing expedition that has caught no fish. However, the report by the Inspector General and the Office of Professional Responsibility that was released on Monday found that former White House Liaison Monica Goodling and many other Justice Department officials committed misconduct by violating both federal law and Department policy.

“The report made clear that Karl Rove and the White House Office of Political Affairs and Presidential Personnel routinely gave recommendations for candidates for career positions at the Department and many of those candidates were placed into those civil service positions, even when they were less qualified than other candidates.

“We now need to hear directly from Mr. Rove, not only so that we can fully understand his role in politicizing the Justice Department, but so that we can pursue additional lines of inquiry. Only after full disclosure of the facts and exposure of misguided and illegal activities, can we return the Department to its core mission of ensuring the fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans.

“Despite the flurry of arguments from the Minority, let’s not lose sight of the critical issue here: Mr. Rove has defied a congressional subpoena and should face the consequences. I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will stand up for this body’s institutional prerogatives by supporting the resolution and the report. After all, our actions set a precedent for future relations between the legislative and executive branches, regardless of which party holds the majority in Congress or occupies the White House.”